Government of Saskatchewan

Annual Report 1986-87

Northern Affairs Secretariat

For the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 1987

Minister
Honourable Graham Taylor

Secretary
Walter F. Keyes

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Minister's Letter of Transmittal

Honourable Frederick W. Johnson
Lieutenant Governor of the
Province of Saskatchewan

Sir:

Fiscal 1986-87 was a year of growth and development for northern Saskatchewan.

New opportunities for employment and business development were created in all sectors of the northern economy — from mining and forestry to the traditional activities of trapping, fishing and agriculture. Throughout the north, individuals, families and communities worked successfully toward increased independence and self-reliance.

The Northern Affairs Secretariat and the Northern Development Advisory Council have played a unique and valuable role in helping to ensure that government's role in development is as effective and efficient as possible.

I am, therefore, pleased to submit the annual report of the Saskatchewan Northern Affairs Secretariat for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1987.

Respectfully submitted,

Graham Taylor
Minister Responsible for the
Northern Affairs Secretariat

Honourable Graham Taylor
Minister Responsible for the
Northern Affairs Secretariat

Secretary's Letter of Transmittal

Walter F. Keyes, Secretary
Northern Affairs Secretariat

Honourable Graham Taylor
Minister Responsible for the
Northern Affairs Secretariat

Sir:

I am pleased to present to you the annual report of the Saskatchewan Northern Affairs Secretariat for the fiscal year ended March 31, 1987.

An attitude of optimism and co-operation exists within government departments and within northern communities. Northern local governments are stronger than ever before and their leaders are anxious to assume a larger role in northern development.

All across the North, people have pointed to unproductive government expenditures in their communities, and suggested constructive ways in which these funds could be redirected to real, long-term development projects. We are pleased to note that government has been receptive to many of these ideas.

During the year under review, the Secretariat continued its involvement with mining development in the North through the co-ordination and negotiation of Mineral Surface Leases. Activity in this area accelerated as a result of the La Ronge "Gold Rush" and the development of the Cigar Lake Uranium Mine. Through the administration of the Northern Economic Development Subsidiary Agreement, the Secretariat helped direct more than $8.5 million in federal and provincial funds to northern business ventures, training and employment opportunities.

We look forward in the months and years ahead to the continued co-operation and good will of all those committed to northern development.

Respectfully submitted,

Walter F. Keyes
Secretary

The Northern Year In Review

From beginning to end, fiscal year 1986-87 in northern Saskatchewan was a story of "first-time" events.

The year began with ratification of the purchase by Weyerhaeuser, Canada Limited of PAPCO, and announcement of plans to construct the Province's first paper mill. The mill, to produce paper products for export, is expected to create 700 jobs during construction and 215 long term jobs in milling and forest harvesting activities.

Forestry matters were also highlighted later in the year as several West-Side communities blockaded roads to protest nearby logging activities. At issue were concerns over lack of consultation about land and resource use in general. After meetings with the Northern Development Advisory Council and several members of Cabinet, plans were laid to negotiate the first Community Forest Management License Agreements in northern Saskatchewan.

In early May, the West Side Community College graduated 22 Home Care Workers at a ceremony marking another first in the health field. The graduates completed a 10 month, Kelsey certified course, enabling Home Care Boards in eight northern communities to offer a high level of service to clients in their own homes.

Elsewhere in areas of education and training, the Northern Teacher Education Program celebrated its 10th anniversary, graduating nine new teachers. On the east side, the North East Community college graduated 14 Life Skills Coaches. Described by their instructor as a "miracle group", this was the first time in her experience that an entire class has successfully completed the gruelling work/study requirements. And, in Prince Albert, the new Northern Institute of Technology officially opened in September. The $35 million facility will eventually be able to accommodate over 1,000 students at a time.

The mineral industry was prominent once again in northern news, with several firsts. In January, 1987 the first official gold bar was poured at the Star Lake gold mine. With a value of about $350,000, this was the first gold from a primary producer in Saskatchewan in 40 years. The gold industry was also responsible for providing employment for a graduating class of geophysical technician's assistants. This pilot project, another successful first, was co-sponsored by the La Ronge Region Community College and the La Ronge Indian Band.

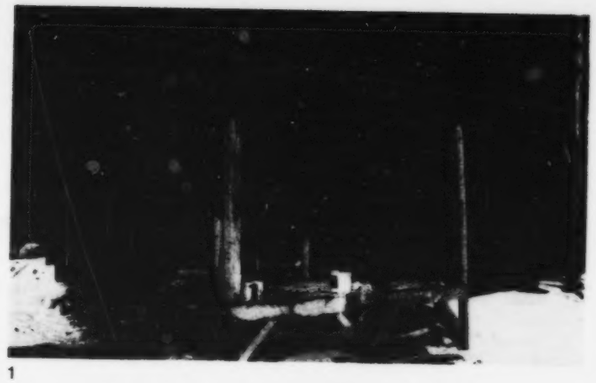
Uranium too, captured its share of exciting news. Figures released by the Saskatchewan Mining Association stated that the northern uranium mines are responsible for creating over 1,300 jobs and paying more than $55 million in wages. In addition to this, the Cigar Lake Mining corporation announced plans to construct a test mine at Waterbury Lake. Once in full operation, the mine will be the biggest in the world with reserves of 385 million pounds of ore, and will have a lifespan of some thirty years. And, AMOK Ltd., one of the north's existing, successful uranium developers, announced the availability of scholarships for its eighth consecutive year. The 11 scholarships (up three from last year) are valued at about $40,000 and are available to northern residents pursuing post-secondary education.

The renewable resource field was also the scene of several firsts during the year. At Montreal Lake, 26 local women completed the first all female training session for forest fire fighters. And, north of La Loche, 230,00 hectares of land surrounding the Clearwater River valley were designated as the Province's first Wilderness Provincial Park, and the first new Provincial Park of any kind since 1973.

In other resource related areas, a wild rice seeding program coupled with good growing conditions saw the eventual harvest of about 320,000 kilograms of rice, a bumper crop worth over $700,000 to northern producers. Continued positive development was assured by the announcement of $948,000 in assistance, federally and provincially, for wild rice research. Saskatchewan's Wild Rice Council, formed in early 1986, ended the year with a three-day conference with international representation, and began to take steps to unite the industry at the national level.

The provincial Northern Development Advisory Council completed its first year of operations and issued its first report to the Minister during 1986-87. The report documented Council activity surrounding a number of major issues including the Athabasca Hydro Transmission Line announced during the year, new road construction from La Loche to Fort McMurray still under discussion, and support for better northern communications, particularly in northeastern Saskatchewan, where a favourable CRTC response resulted. In general, the theme of recommendations made in the report is that government and northern people need to develop shared and clearly communicated views on northern development. Along these lines the Council, at year end, began planning for the first ever Northern Agricultural Conference to share ideas and to explore new opportunities.

Some month-by-month "headlines" of the northern year are given on page 8.



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1986-87 in Review

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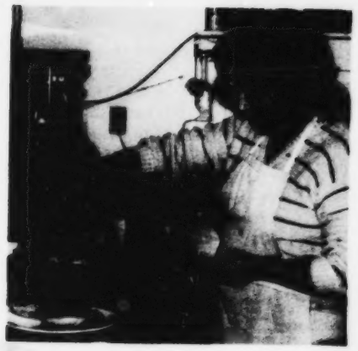

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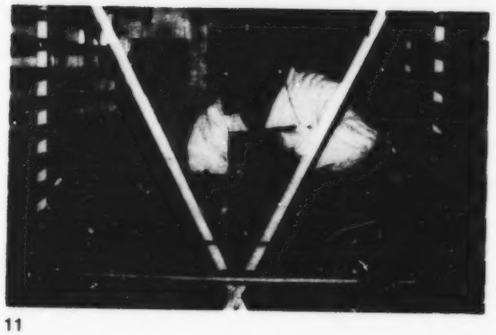

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1. Log home built under a NEDSA training program in Ile-a-la-Crosse.
2. The Key Lake Uranium Mine and Mill.
3. Beaver floatplanes, the workhorse of the North.
4. Community College training programs provide instruction in many aspects of the trapping industry.
5. Training in linecutting and exploration techniques enables many northerners to gain employment in the mineral exploration industry.
6. Overhauling the engine of a snowmobile, vital to northern occupations such as trapping, commercial fishing and tourist outfitting.
7. Instructor and students in the University of Regina Local Government Administration course taught at the West Side Community College in Buffalo Narrows.
8. Training in the food industry is important for tourism development in the north.
9. Learning baking skills at one of Northern Saskatchewan's many small businesses.
10. Honourable Graham Taylor meets with Honourable H.A. 'Boomer' Adair, Minister responsible for the Northern Alberta Development Council, to discuss issues of common concern.
11. Northland Processors Inc. of La Ronge manufactures specialty smoked meat products.
12. Honourable Pat Smith, Minister of Energy and Mines, displays the first gold brick from the Star Lake Mine, for Honourable Lorne Hepworth.

April

Highways Minister Grant Hodgins and North Dakota representatives announced formation of a private sector organization to be involved in marketing the new Can-Am Highway Route. Stretching from Mexico to Missinipe, the north-south travel corridor is expected to boost tourism to Saskatchewan destinations.

May

The Department of Parks and Renewable Resources reported successfully stocking over 10 million whitefish in several lakes on the west side, for the benefit of northern commercial fishermen and local northern consumers.

June

The Department of Education announced completion of a set of five new books for all grade 10 to 12 students in the province, highlighting Metis participation in development of Western Canada. The texts were produced by the Gabriel Dumont Institute, following recommendations made by the provincial Indian and Metis Curriculum Advisory Committee.

July

Northern Saskatchewan trappers received some unexpected support from the Roman Catholic and Anglican bishops of northern Canada. Denouncing the anti-trapping lobby groups, the bishops called for public support for aboriginal trapping, and federal government assistance to expand the domestic fur market.

August

Six northern forestry groups had the opportunity to make presentations to the Saskatchewan Trade Negotiations Secretariat. The purpose of the hearings was to assist the Province's negotiators in developing "Saskatchewan's voice" for input at the federal level in bilateral free-trade talks between Canada and the United States.

September

Twenty-six women from Montreal Lake graduated from the first all-female fire-fighter training course offered by Saskatchewan Parks and Renewable Resources.

October

New figures on sports fishing were released to delegates at the Northern Saskatchewan Outfitters' Association annual convention. The figures show that sports fishing is a big business in Saskatchewan and a growth industry.

November

Following a wide spread crop failure last year, wild rice industry officials report that the year's harvest was the second best on record for the wild rice industry in Saskatchewan.

December

By year-end, gold exploration north of La Ronge accounted for almost 300 person years of employment with wages of some $8 million. Total mineral exploration expenditures exceeded $18 million in 1986.

January, 1987

On January 2, the first brick of gold was poured at the Star Lake Mine.

February

A delegation of residents from La Loche and surrounding communities travelled a winter road route to Fort McMurray, Alberta, to bring attention to the need for construction of an all weather road link. Municipal leaders in both centres pointed to benefits in tourism, health care and employment that would result from completion of the 100 kilometre road.

March

The Saskatchewan Mining Associaton predicted that gold exploration would provide a bright light in the mineral industry in 1987. Investment in gold exploration was estimated to reach $30 million, with local economic benefits expected to account for a significant proportion of expenditures in the La Ronge, Southend and Creighton areas.

1986-87 Achievements

Policy Planning & Coordination

A priority of the combined efforts of the Secretariat and the Northern Development Advisory Council has been the distillation of a wide range of proposals, ideas, and concerns into concrete recommendations for action in the north. This has required extensive consultation with northern local governments, representatives of the mining, fishing, forestry, trapping and agriculture sector, and officials of the federal and provincial governments. Key recommendations proposed during the year in review include:

- Increased options for private ownership of land in the North with, as a first step, the transfer to local communities of Crown-owned land within municipal boundaries.
- Transfer of government-owned farms and sawmills to individuals and groups in the north where interest has been expressed.
- More local control over and access to renewable resources through, for example, the sharing of revenues from hunting and fishing licenses and land use and trapping permits with local communities.
- Greater community control over and responsibility for certain government programs such as housing.

Throughout 1986-87, the Secretariat held seminars and meetings to inform senior officials of the provincial and federal governments about important northern issues. Speakers included northern mayors, representatives of the mining industry, and individuals active in employment and economic development in the North.

Through the fall and winter, the Secretariat worked closely with the Northern Development Advisory Council, Saskatchewan Agriculture, and the Saskatchewan Indian Agriculture Program to organize Saskatchewan's first Northern Agriculture Conference.

Darcy Mitchell
Assistant
Secretary
Northern Affairs
Secretariat

Enroute to a community meeting in Cumberland House, Saskatchewan's oldest settlement.

Northern Economic Development Subsidiary Agreement (NEDSA)

The NEDSA is a $36 million, Canada/Saskatchewan initiative aimed at enhancing northern employment and economic development opportunities. Since its 1984 signing, contributions for northern development under the five-year agreement have totalled about $16.5 million. Administration of the provincial side of NEDSA is a major task for Secretariat staff, with valuable benefits for northern residents.

In the year under review, 67 new projects were approved for NEDSA financial assistance. In locations across northern Saskatchewan, the agreement contributed to new businesss starts related to primary and secondary resource-based industry, to training northern residents for identified, stable employment opportunities, and to the completion of a number of locally based economic development planning initiatives. Total expenditures under the agreement in 1986-87 were approximately $8.7 million.

Administration of NEDSA requires frequent inter-departmental contact federally and provincially in project assessments involving a variety of private sector and institutional clients. This contact is welcomed and encouraged by the Secretariat, and contributes directly to achieving strong inter-agency co-ordination on issues broadly related to the socal and economic development of northern Saskatchewan.

Brian Goffin
Branch Manager
La Ronge

With NEDSA support, the North East Community College has trained students from throughout the region to become Native Counsellors and Life Skills Coaches.

Mineral Surface Leases

The Secretariat makes a direct contribution to development of the north's growing mineral industry through negotiation, on behalf of government, of Mineral Surface Leases with private sector developers.

The Mineral Surface Lease is recognized in northern Saskatchewan not only as a land tenure instrument, but also as a means to describe a development process reflecting the interests of the government, the proponent and Saskatchewan's public. A cooperative approach ensures that the industry is encouraged to grow and prosper in the north, with appropriate environmental and occupational safety measures in place, and with special efforts to provide local business and employment opportunities.

In the year under review, negotiations began with a prospective gold mining developer for a small, rich mineral property in the gold belt north of La Ronge. At least two other gold deposits in the same general area show good potential for early development.

Negotiations also began with the Cigar Lake Mining Corporation for development of a uranium deposit near Waterbury Lake. Assuming this project reaches full potential, it will be the world's largest uranium mine, generating enormous economic benefits over its projected 25-30 year lifespan. Start-up is tentatively scheduled for the early 1990's.

Mining provides many opportunities for northern training and employment in, for example, heavy equipment operation at Key Lake Mine.

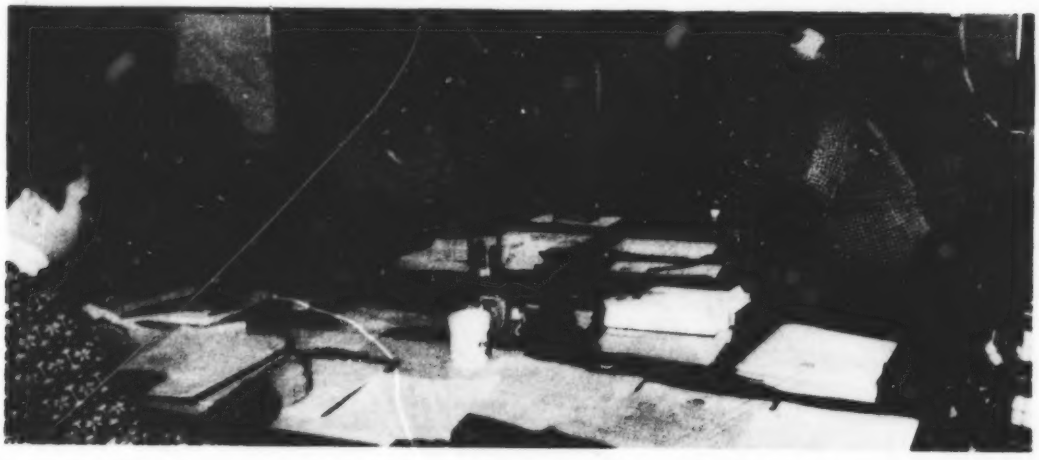
Northern Development Advisory Council

The Northern Development Advisory Council celebrated its first anniversary on December 1, 1986.

Reporting directly to the Minister Responsible for the Northern Affairs Secretariat, the Council criss-crossed Northern Saskatchewan during 1986-87 to hold public meetings in La Ronge, La Loche, Stony Rapids, Sandy Bay and Uranium City. In these public consultation meetings, and through dozens of briefs, letters, private meetings, seminar and telephone calls, the Council learned of ideas and issues affecting every facet of life in the North.

The Council's first report, covering its activities and findings to March 31, 1986, was released in October and contained recommendations on a number of important northern issues. These included proposals to improve northern transportation and communications, strengthen northern municipal financing, increase northerners' access to and control over local resources, and enhance northern employment opportunities. In 1986-87 year-end recommendations to the Minister, the Northern Development Advisory Council gave strong emphasis to proposals in those areas which would give individuals, families and local governments a greater role in economic development and in delivery of provincial and federal programming at the community level.

For the coming year, the Council will continue to work with local communities, senior governments, and the private sector to implement concrete action proposals in accordance with northern concerns and Council recommendations.



The Northern Development Advisory Council in session. From left, staff member Joanne Epp; Bill Klassen, Chairman; Ben Siemens; Tony Durocher; Joe Roberts; Louis Bear. Not present: Anne Hryniuk, Walter Kupsch, John Carriere.

Northern Saskatchewan